

How Can We Better Serve You in 2018?

It's amazing what we learn through listening and observing.



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER KATHI CALVERT

IT'S A NEW YEAR—TIME TO PUT NEW IDEAS INTO ACTION. Here at Houston County Electric Cooperative, we are always trying to come up with new ways to satisfy our members' needs. We've found the best way to do that is by listening to your suggestions.

For example, many members asked for an easier way to monitor their energy usage, pay bills and report outages. We listened and provide you with our HCEC mobile app which allows you to interact with us in many ways, including bill payment and outage reporting. We also offer eBiz for online account management to check the status of your account and receive real-time updates on energy use. You may want to take advantage of our text or email notification services as well to receive alerts when your bill is available or when it is due. Also, watch for our new bill design with more weather and historical usage information coming this month.

These services are just some of the ways we connect with you, as are the member services representatives who answer when you call or greet you when you visit our office. They help us offer the quality services you expect us to provide.

Another of our goals is to find more ways to help you control energy costs. That's why we communicate with you in these pages about ways we can work together to ease the burdens on your wallet.

Listening improves understanding, builds trust, strengthens relationships and fosters cooperation. It's also crucial to collaboration and success. That's why our co-op employees enjoy meeting our members.

One of the best venues for that is our annual meeting, a social event for our whole co-op family. We held our 78th Annual Meeting in November. If you missed it, we have shared some photos and hope you'll make plans now to join us on November 1st at our 79th Annual "Fish Fry" Meeting that will include you taking part in co-op business, visiting with friends and neighbors, and partaking in fun and prizes.

So, how do we serve you better in 2018? The same way many of us try to serve the community, society and family better each day: by listening. In our offices, on the phone, through social media exchanges and in our face-to-face meetings, we're ready to listen.

When you have questions about energy efficiency, electrical service or any of our services, just ask us. When we know just what you want, we're in a better position to deliver successful results. So stop by and see us, give us a call or drop us a line. We're always glad to hear from you.

The Weather Is Perfect

Why is my power out and when will it be restored?

OUR MEMBERS ARE VERY IMPORTANT.

Speaking on behalf all HCEC employees, it is never our intent to disappoint you. Our goal is to prevent all outages possible. We prevent outages through regular system maintenance such as trimming our easement on a routine basis and cutting hazard trees, and by installing protection equipment such as placing animal guards on poles.

However, even during a beautiful fall day with no wind and 70-degree weather, we may still have outages. Normally outages under these conditions are rare and involve few members, but it does occur. Unfortunately, during perfect weather conditions, we had a large outage affecting our entire Groveton area lasting more than 12 hours on November 4, opening day of deer season and Centerville ISD Homecoming.

The cause of the outage was a squirrel on our power supplier's equipment. We cannot not work on another utility's electric distribution system. Nor, can other utilities work on HCEC's system. It is a safety issue, and while all utilities adhere to strict safety standards, we have different procedures and protocols. We were present the entire duration of the outage waiting to re-energize our system once repairs were completed. We attempted to provide accurate restoration time based on the information the other utility shared with us.

We are disappointed that we could not do more for our members during this event. We understand your frustration and the inconvenience during an outage.

Our dispatch team and linemen take tremendous pride in responding to all outages in a timely and efficient manner. We will continue working to improve your service and keep you informed.

3 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking for easy ways to lower your energy bills this winter? Here's a few tips from the Department of Energy:

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Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
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Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
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Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

HOUSTON COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS THE RECIPIENT OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Kathi Calvert, general manager. Any individual or specific class of individuals who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Stop 1510, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC, 20250-1510; or the Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC, 20250-9410; or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). The USDA is an equal-opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

Did You Know?

Persistent dirt lines on floors likely can be blamed on air leaks. Dirt travels in moisture, which travels in heat, which seeks cold. Where lines exist around the joints between walls and floors, check for drafts, then seal the leaks.



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Houston County Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 52, Crockett, TX 75835

GENERAL MANAGER

Kathi Calvert

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dan Courmier, President
Kennon Kellum, Vice President
Mitchell Huff, Secretary-Treasurer
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William Emmons
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Charles "Chuck" Siems
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Contact Us

**TO REPORT A POWER OUTAGE,
CALL OUR 24-HOUR HOTLINE**

1-800-970-4232 toll-free

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

*For general information
during business hours*

(936) 544-5641 local

1-800-657-2445 toll-free

To report an outage or other problem with electrical service, press 1.

To make a payment over the phone or speak with a member services representative in the billing department, press 2.

For electrical connects, transfers and disconnects, press 5.

For directions to our office, mailing address or fax number, press 6.

For satellite internet services, press 7.

For staking and construction, press 8.

FIND US ON THE WEB

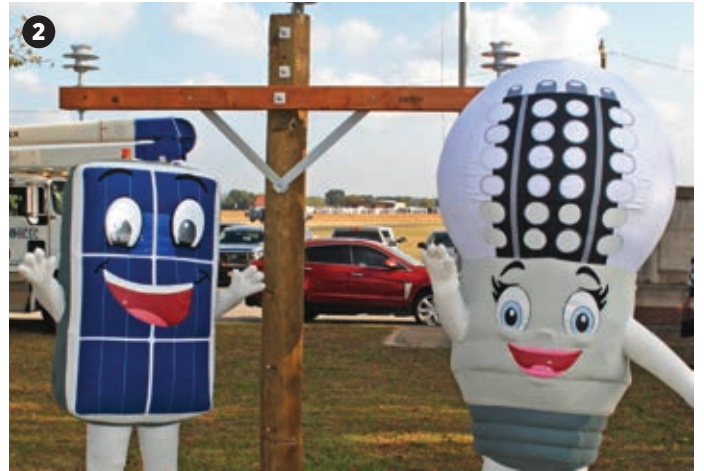
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FIND US ON FACEBOOK

78th Annual Meeting of Members

PHOTOS BY KELBY KOEHLER | HOUSTON COUNTY EC





1. Houston County EC fleet manager Cody Robinson and second-class lineman Doug Whitehead greet members in front of the Touchstone Energy cold-air balloon.
2. Special guests Solar Sam and LED Lucy welcome members to the 78th Annual Meeting of Members.
3. Maryssa Rivers, daughter of Houston County EC serviceman Russell Rivers, climbs the pole at the member photo booth during the meeting.
4. Chuck Siems, District 3 director, talks with members during the drawing of door prizes.
5. Mac Eastep of Trinity County shaking hands with David Whittlesey,

- Trinity County director, after winning the grand prize of a \$500 bill credit.
6. Joe (not pictured) and Laura Vanacek of Trinity County were the winners of a 50-inch smart TV donated by Mark Stevens of Irby Construction.
7. David Whittlesey, Trinity County director, gives his sign of approval at the 78th Annual Meeting of Members.
8. Two of our cooks, Donald Lamb and Kirby Spinks, take a break from frying fish to get a quick photo.
9. Houston County EC members gather together during the 78th Annual Meeting of Members.



ALTON PORTER | THE COURIER

Most Artistic Lighting 2017

Gary White, Houston County EC's Santa Claus and chief financial officer, waves at paradegoers during the annual Christmas parade in Crockett.

Giving Back Is the Co-op Way

COBANK, THROUGH ITS SHARING SUCCESS charitable contribution program, will match annually up to three donations totaling \$5,000 by any one of its members to qualifying charity organizations. As a participating member, Houston County EC made two donations in 2017 that were matched by the Sharing Success program.

Houston County EC is proud to partner with CoBank and be a part of Sharing Success. We feel this is a great way to give back to the communities we serve.

The 2017 CoBank Sharing Success recipients are:

- Houston County SHARE
- Relay for Life—Anderson County.



KELBY KOEHLER | HOUSTON COUNTY EC

Gary White, HCEC chief financial officer; Ken Gajdos, CoBank Electric Distribution Division vice president; Cliff Coldiron, Houston County SHARE president; Kathi Calvert, HCEC general manager; and Butch Calvert, SHARE volunteer, present the check to Houston County SHARE.

HCEC Has Many Opportunities for Area Students

HOUSTON COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HAS THREE EXCELLENT programs to further area high school students' educations.

The Government-in-Action Youth Tour offers two high school students (in 10th, 11th or 12th grade) the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., to tour our nation's capital. Students selected to represent Houston County EC will receive an all-expense-paid trip to visit the U.S. Capitol, meet members of Congress and see historical sites from June 6–15, 2018. Applicants must reside in the home of a parent or legal guardian who is a Houston County EC member with an active account and whose primary residence is within Houston County EC's service area. Students in accredited home-extended study programs are eligible to apply. Applications are due January 19.

In addition to the summer trip to Washington for Youth Tour, Houston County EC also sponsors 12 students to attend the East Texas Rural Electric Youth Seminar. ETREYS was formed by nine electric distribution cooperatives, including Houston County EC, in East Texas in the late 1980s.

The mission of ETREYS is to foster positive ideas and values among young people and to enhance skills in leadership, problem solving and interpersonal relationships. While at ETREYS, students can expect to participate in workshops, seminars and peer group activities that range from leadership development to pure entertainment. These activities develop leadership qualities and provide insight to the cooperative way of life.

Nationally known personalities, college professors and community leaders speak at the event. Additionally, each student competes for thousands of dollars in college scholarships and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington the following summer. Sending students to ETREYS is one way Houston County EC honors its commitment to the community.

Houston County EC offers multiple Dorothy H. Goodrum Scholarships for students planning to continue their education after high school. Applicants must be graduating high school seniors and must reside in the home of a parent or legal guardian who is a Houston County EC member with an active account and whose primary residence is within the Houston County EC service area. Students in accredited home-extended study programs are eligible to apply. Applications are due January 19.

Government-in-Action Youth Tour and Dorothy H. Goodrum Scholarship applications will be available through area high school counselors, at Houston County EC's headquarters in Crockett and at houstoncountyelec.com under the General Information tab, then Community Involvement. ETREYS applications will be available in January.

For information on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour and Dorothy H. Goodrum Scholarships, contact Lynne Erickson at lerickson@houstoncountyelec.com or (936) 544-5641. For questions about ETREYS, contact Kelby Koehler at kkoehler@houstoncountyelec.com or (936) 544-5641.



Caroline Wakefield (white cap), 2017 Houston County EC Government-in-Action Youth Tour winner, and other students speak with a U.S. Secret Service member.



Bailey Wakefield, top right, 2017 Houston County EC ETREYS camper, is lifted into the air by inspirational speaker and musician Isaac Tauaefa.